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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2005, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2005

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BURR, a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The opening prayer will be given by our guest Chaplain, COL Ralph G. Benson, Pentagon Chaplain.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Won't you pray with me.

Lord God, Creator and Sustainer of the universe. You uplift us in times of prosperity and comfort us in times of want. You are the still small voice who reminds us of all that is good, all that is holy, all that is just. We live in an unstable world. Yet You, O Lord, are never changing, all forgiving, all merciful, all holy.

Provide today, O Lord, Your divine guidance and blessing. Allow our Senators to hear Your still small voice. Open their discussions to that which will bless our people and crown our Nation with blessing.

Enable us to avoid the pitfalls of sin and direct us to those decisions that are merciful, holy, and true. May we magnify Your will through our endeavors in Government today. For indeed, Lord, our desire is to please You and to follow the leadings of Your divine will. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BURR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 11, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD BURR, a Senator from the State of North Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BURR thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the Senate will begin this afternoon with a period for morning business to allow Senators to make statements and introduce legislation. At 3 p.m. today, Chairman COCHRAN will be here to begin consideration of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for

defense, the global war on terror, and tsunami relief. I expect opening statements on that bill during the afternoon. I also hope if Senators have amendments, they will begin to offer those amendments during today's session. At the very least, Senators should notify the cloakrooms of their desire to offer specific amendments so that the chairman and ranking member may begin the process of scheduling their considerations.

I remind all Senators we have a vote scheduled this afternoon at 5:30 on the confirmation of a U.S. district judge. That is the nomination of Paul Crotty to the Southern District of New York. In addition to that vote, we have a resolution relating to airbus that we will likely schedule for a rollcall vote. Therefore, Senators can expect at least two votes today. I add that if amendments are offered to the appropriations bill today, I will also be talking to the managers of the bill and the Democratic leader about scheduling votes on those as well.

This important bill provides necessary funds for the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as additional funding for humanitarian assistance related to the tsunami. I hope the Senate will act effectively and efficiently on this appropriations bill and use the underlying legislation as focus of the intent of this bill and not as target practice for other amendments. There has been a lot of discussion over the issue of immigration. I believe the Senate will need to address immigration reform. However, this is not the place for comprehensive immigration reform. We need to be thoughtful and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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deliberate on that issue and not allow funding for our troops to become ensnarled in that national debate. The Democratic leader and I have begun discussions on the aspect of how we might address immigration. I do urge our colleagues to show restraint on this issue and on other issues that will clearly slow down this emergency spending bill.

Having said that, we will have a very busy week on the bill. We can expect full sessions and well into some evenings as we consider this legislation. I do thank my colleagues.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

U.S. CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the Republican leader leaves the floor, I would like to say, through the Chair, that Senator FRIST and I were in his office when we were approached by the Sergeant at Arms about an incident in front of the Capitol. People were able to watch on national TV what took place. Parts of the building were evacuated.

The reason I mention this, without going into a lot of detail, is because of the great police force we have that takes care of the U.S. Capitol. They did work that was brilliant. I spoke to the Sergeant of Arms before we went into session. What they did to get ready to take that man down was extraordinary.

We have the finest trained police force anywhere in the country. I would put our men and women up against anyone else. They do such a wonderful job. I express my appreciation for the whole Senate for the work of the Sergeant at Arms and Chief Gainer. This is professionalism at its best.

What we do not see, of course, are the many times when they work off camera, when they do it late at night in various parts of this building where there are not a lot of people watching them.

Mr. President, again, I applaud and congratulate every member of our Capitol Police force.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. CON. RES. 25

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the 5:30 p.m. vote today, the Senate then immediately proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 25; provided further, the Senate then proceed to a vote on adoption of the concurrent resolution, with no intervening action or debate, and no amendments in order to the resolution or preamble.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, am I recognized?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, my speech will probably need 40 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that I may utilize as much time as I need.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

THE GASOLINE CRISIS—A TIME FOR ACTION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in my home State of West Virginia and all across America, our people are frustrated and outraged with the soaring cost of gasoline.

The rising cost of gasoline means workers in West Virginia are seeing their paychecks dramatically reduced by the simple fact that they have to drive to get to work and to get back home. It is darned difficult and expensive for a coal miner to pay \$2.25 a gallon to drive his pickup truck to work on the two-lane, hilly, winding roads of West Virginia.

Noting that West Virginians have become "hawkish about watching gas prices," the Charleston, WV, Gazette of March 11, 2005, pointed out that they "have few mass transportation options, travel farther to work, and often traverse [much] more rugged terrain."

Automobiles are essential for West Virginians to get to work. According to Census data, although West Virginia is a relatively small State, workers in West Virginia spend more time commuting to work than the national average.

Mr. President, 86 percent of West Virginians use cars or trucks to get to work, and nearly 75 percent of West Virginians commute by themselves in

their pickup trucks and other such vehicles.

The percentage of people in West Virginia who own a pickup truck is almost double the national average. Nearly one-third of West Virginians must travel outside their home county to get to work. Let me say that again. Nearly one-third of West Virginians must travel outside their home county to get to work, a figure that is 17 percent above the national average, and an average West Virginian drives more miles—now get this—the average West Virginian drives more miles each year than average Americans throughout the rest of the country.

The point is this: West Virginians rely on their cars and their pickup trucks to keep West Virginia working. Large, rugged vehicles are not an expensive luxury for workers in West Virginia and in many other rural States, and anyone who has tried to navigate the narrow, uphill climbs of West Virginia's mountains by weaving around corners, constantly slowing, constantly accelerating and stopping and starting knows the need for these rugged vehicles and, regrettably, the cost of fueling them.

Imagine navigating that kind of terrain not only to work but also in getting children to school, as well as to the grocery store.

The frustration and the outrage of West Virginians paying \$25, \$30, and \$45 just to gas up is certainly understandable.

Family budgets already strained by the rising costs of health insurance, the rising costs of college tuition, and other everyday expenses are being stretched even thinner by these record-breaking gasoline prices in West Virginia. West Virginia's small businesses depend on deliveries. Floral shops, pizza parlors, produce shippers, taxi companies, construction and remodeling businesses, plumbers, electricians, landscapers are finding it harder to make ends meet. Many are going out of business.

I recently read of an independent trucker who lives and works in Norfolk, VA, telling the Christian Science Monitor that last year she paid more than \$250 a week for fuel, and that was making her life as a single parent very difficult. She was even forced to decide between paying a doctor bill for her child or buying new tires for her truck. Guess who lost. "My truck lost," she explained.

Today's record high gasoline prices in West Virginia are affecting literally everyone from commuters, consumers, and businesses to public and private agencies. Meals on Wheels programs are having trouble delivering meals. Think of it. Local governments already straining to pay for essential services in these days of cutbacks in Federal assistance are simply overwhelmed in their efforts to keep schoolbuses, police cars, firetrucks, and other city and county vehicles in operation. What a shame.